

# THE CORRESPONDENT.

MAGNA EST VERITAS ET PREVALEBIT.

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## CORRESPONDENCE.

### A FUTURE STATE.

Mr. Editor—The belief in a future state of existence is so flattering to human vanity, that to question its correctness may seem like a wanton attack upon human happiness. But error can never be more beneficial to man than truth; and what is error, can, so far as man is concerned, be tested only by subjecting the proofs in relation to it to the investigations of reason. Though it be strictly and universally true, that we neither believe nor disbelieve aught, but in accordance with the dictates of reason; yet, it by no means follows that our belief is always, or even generally, right. Our reason forms true or false conclusions, according to the predominating weight of the evidence which is presented to it; and the effect of this evidence, aside from its own nature and conclusiveness, depends, in each individual, upon the texture and habits of the mind to which it is presented. Hence, that which is proof positive to the mind of one man, is hardly proof presumptive to another; and hence the endless varieties of human belief. Yet, amid all this apparent confusion and discrepancy, one position remains invariable and incontrovertible; that each believes or disbelieves in exact accordance with what, to his mind, appears to be the predominant proof. Thus, faith being the result of the convictions of reason, and those convictions depending upon the weight of evidence, it must always be material, in estimating the probable truth or falsehood of any belief, to inquire into the evidence upon which it is founded.

Let us apply these principles to test the probable correctness or incorrectness of the belief in a future existence. The available arguments in its favor, aside from *revelation*, which, for obvious reasons, we lay out of the account, are:

That it accords with our fondest hopes and wishes, and that God would never have implanted in us an aspiration so powerful and predominant, unless it were ultimately to be gratified:

That the antiquity and universality of the belief are strong circumstances in favor of its being well founded:

That the soul of man being spiritual instead of material, is necessarily imperishable:

That the dignity of man, and his importance in the scale of creation, demand for him a more extended existence than is allotted to him here; and finally,

That the doctrine of a resurrection is at least fairly inferable, from analogy.

Such, we believe, is a summary of all the arguments which have been or can be adduced in favor of the doctrine: let us see how much they are worth.

The first argument assumes too much; and if its assumptions were granted, would prove too much. Mankind, it is true, in their rage for castle building, have built many fanciful, and some pleasant theories upon the assumed possibility or probability of a future existence. But, so they have upon the supposed perfectibility of man, upon the delusions of alchymy, and upon a thousand other "whim whams" equally unfounded. So have the Jews built, and still build, fond, but chimerical hopes upon the coming of the Messiah; and so the Christians delude themselves with the expectation of a millenium—the very year of the commencement of which has been predicted and repredicted by successive enthusiasts, from the time of the earliest Christians until the present day. Thus, too, every individual, in his progress through life, indulges in a thousand fond, but unreal, hopes and wishes. But neither the hopes of the Jew, the Christian, nor the individual, prove any thing; or, even add one grain to the probability, that what they hope will be realized. Nor is it true, as a matter of experience, that human beings generally realize their fondest or their most ardent hopes. But, if God permits to man the disappointment of his hopes and wishes concerning this world; why should those hopes which aspire beyond the grave be exempt from a similar fate? Our hopes in this life usually rest upon something which it is at least possible for us to realize; upon something which others of our race *have* grasped, and which there is, therefore, a demonstrable possibility that we *may* grasp. Such, for instance, are the hopes of fame, of wealth, or of power. We see those who have acquired power, those who have accumulated wealth, and those who have attained to honors and distinctions. This renders it at least possible that we may do so, too; for what man has done, man may do again. But, do we see any, or know of any, who have risen from the dead; any who, "in putting off this mortal, have put on immortality?" If not; then why do we hope that we may do so?

Equally unsubstantial and unconvincing is the argument which is predicated upon the antiquity and generality of the belief in a future existence. How ancient the belief may have been, we know not; but we have sufficient evidence that, in the earlier ages at least, it was far from universal. The most enlightened of the ancient philosophers either rejected the idea altogether, or treated it, at best, as a pleasing dream. As to the mass of mankind, they, evidently, knew nothing more about it than they were taught in the fables of their poets. To the Jews, if we are to receive the testimony of their own Bible, it was, for many ages after their existence as a nation and after the formation and adoption of their system of religious faith, entirely unknown; and down to the very close of their national history and existence, it seems to have constituted a moot point in their faith.

But those who are conversant with the history of human creeds must have remarked, that this same argument of antiquity and universality has been a standing witness, regularly brought forward in support of all the absurd and exploded systems of belief, whether in religion or philoso-

phy. The same argument would prove the world to be flat, and a fixture; the same argument would establish the existence and supernatural power of witches, devils, and sorcerers; and the same argument, had it been, as luckily it has not, sufficient to prove what its adducers wished, would have erected a barrier as impassable as the grave itself, to the march of the human mind. The dust, the rust, the mould, and the cobwebs, which have for so many centuries enshrined and protected the *antique* in philosophy and physics, have been swept away by the busy and fearless hand of modern investigation: why should those which envelope religion be allowed to remain?

*To be continued.* 179.

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ANTIDOTE VERSUS CORRESPONDENT.

Sir—As an interested, a dispassionate inquirer after the truth or falsehood of the Christian system of theology, permit me to address a few words to you; though not indeed with the belief that I have any observations of a novel or important character to introduce on this obscure and unintelligible subject. But having from the first, with the desire of obtaining some additional aid to the weak perception with which I am gifted, supported both your paper and the one which maintains, or at least promised to maintain, against it “a constant and rigid warfare,” I hope the columns of one or the other will admit my few crude and unconnected remarks. It appears to me that no person possessing a mind of sufficient energy to think at all, can remain neutral upon the subject of religion. I must therefore admit that mine has taken a decisive stand on the chief points at issue betwixt the two belligerents. “My *bane* and *antidote* are both before me; *this* in a moment brings” conviction, by inviting the use of our senses—of reasonable probability where absolute certainty is beyond our reach; “but *this* informs me” reason is a most treacherous guide, where the subject is most contradictory and inexplicable; that the whole human family are liable to pass the countless ages of eternity in an unextinguishable lake of fire and brimstone, elements the most dreadful to our nature; and that in all probability three fourths of our number will undergo this tremendous, this horrible fate. It is in vain we are told about an unnatural sacrifice of a son by his father, whereby the latter may be, or already has been, appeased, and our dreadful fate thereby averted. Unprejudiced, unsophisticated human nature rejects the cruel, absurd, and ridiculous tale.

But granting that this revolting fable was a fact in its leading points, what does it prove? Why, that after its existence for eighteen hundred years, out of eight or nine hundred millions of human beings who now inhabit this globe, only two hundred and eleven millions have ever heard of it; and how many among that number will be saved, appears to be not yet *ascertained*. But it was not to expatiate on the inconsistencies of the Jewish or Christian theologies, a work which you have so triumphantly performed, and which the unrefuted pages of the *Correspondent* will prove, that I have taken up the pen, but to notice some of the miserable logic used in the *Antidote* to support a tottering cause. The conductors of that paper are constantly vociferating “give us a better system



of religion"—"let us have a new creed before you destroy the old one," &c. &c. I ask, can the mind of man conceive, could there possibly be invented a system, a creed of religion more cruel and desolating, more destructive to the happiness of mankind, than the Jewish or Christian has been? Need we in confirmation (passing over the bloodthirsty monsters mentioned in the Jewish annals) refer to the murderous tragedies performed in every kingdom of Europe by the followers of Christ? Truly such a personage, if he came at all, did indeed come, "not to bring peace but a sword."

But we shall be told "these men were not *real* Christians; they were only professors—the *name* only, and not the *spirit* of genuine Christianity was with them"—to which I reply, call the actors in these cruel scenes by what name they will, they were the *majority* of the sect; thus utterly disproving all just pretensions to any beneficial results arising to the bulk of mankind from the introduction of this dreadful creed of religion. This was indeed a sacrifice—a salvation with a vengeance! It appears to me impossible that two honest and rational men can look each other in the face and acknowledge their belief in this Arabian Nights story. But, say some *pious* Christians, filled with charity, mercy, humility, fire and brimstone, "true, the sacrifice is only for the benefit of those who believe in it, and live a moral, upright, and irreproachable life; but, as this may be done by all, it may justly be deemed a universal and glorious means of salvation." Precious reasoning indeed! throwing the wildest, most extravagant flights of Cervantes's pen into the shade: such contemptible subterfuges are surely undeserving a serious reply. All I shall ask is, how was the state of the case before this demigod appeared on earth and had himself put to death? Would not a moral and virtuous life have insured salvation at that era? or did God in his unerring *justice* consign every human being to everlasting perdition, merely because they chanced to appear on the stage of life a few years, or a few centuries before he sent his son (or a part of himself) to suffer a violent death; a death, by the bye, much less painful than many which have since been inflicted by the *meek* and *pious* followers of the cross?

It is, indeed, true, Christianity has of late lost some of its most ferocious, inhuman characteristics; but to what is this improvement owing? Not to its "divine origin, revelation, inspiration," &c., but to that universal increase of knowledge, acquired during the last two centuries, in every branch of science and the arts, improvements which the gloomy and bigotted spirit of Christianity could not prevent; but in whose march it was reluctantly compelled to join. But I find I am diverging from the line I set out to follow, and my time and your limits will probably for the present curtail my observations on some of the *sound* and *convincing* arguments used in the *Antidote*. It is impossible to take up a number of that publication without finding *quantum sufficit* of faith and folly. In their 15th No. these zealous defenders of "our holy religion" have advanced 61 reasons for being a true Christian: most of these reasons are in direct opposition to truth, and several of them are perfectly synonymous, but expressed with some trifling variation of language; the writer no doubt wishing to make the "most of a good thing." I think it is the Rev. Joseph Simpson, in his *Plea for Religion*, who, in a similar manner,

gives us some five hundred and fifty reasons for believing the son of Joseph and Mary to have been the son of God. These reasons I remember, a few years ago, first induced me seriously to examine whether a cause which required such a forced and labored vindication was not virtually unsound and fallacious. The result has been to my mind, a full conviction that it is a very awkwardly "devised fable." S.

New York, Sept. 24, 1827.

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Mr. Editor—Pope Gregory IX. excommunicated Frederick II., emperor of Germany, A. D. 1237. In his second bull of excommunication are the following remarkable expressions: "*This* king of plagues was even heard to say, that the whole world had been deceived by three imposters; namely, Moses, Jesus Christ, and Mahomet. He makes Jesus Christ far inferior to the other two. *They* (says he) supported their glory to the last: whereas, Christ was ignominiously crucified. He also maintains, that it is a folly to believe the one only God, the creator of the universe, could be born of a *woman*, and more especially of a *virgin*."—[Gol. Pers. cap. lxiv.] Some particulars of the history of the Guelphs and Ghibelines, the crusade against Frederick II., &c. would, I think, be instructive to the readers of the *Correspondent*; though the history of that unhappy period would horribly disgust them.

Manzel, chaplain to Henry III., king of England, was at one time holder of seven hundred ecclesiastical livings. But the pope was far richer. He exacted the revenues of all vacant benefices; the twentieth of all ecclesiastical revenues; the third of such as exceeded 100 marks annually; and the half of such as were possessed by non residents. He levied voluntary contributions on the people; claimed a right to all money got by usury, and to the goods of all intestate clergymen, &c. &c. Have clergymen of America been divested from this ambitious and avaricious disposition? What do they aim at by their popular exertions, and national associations, but influence, power, riches, honors, and domination? Let all beware of such. B.

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#### SODOM AND GOMORRAH.

Mr. Editor—I heard, with much pleasure, the lecture delivered last Sunday week, at the room of the Free Press Society, on the absurdities and contradictions of the Bible. Though the speaker did ample justice to the subject, yet I am persuaded that those absurdities and contradictions might have been made still more glaringly apparent, had time permitted, and the mind of the lecturer been directed to it; I mean the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah by fire and brimstone, rained down from heaven. I take the liberty, without meaning any disparagement to the judicious manner in which the speaker treated the subject, to supply what at most may be considered as an omission.

Within forty years, modern chemistry has discovered that our atmosphere is composed of two gases, or, in more humble language, two kinds of air, to wit, oxygen gas and nitrogen gas. Every hundred pounds of the common air, that in which we live, is composed of nitrogen, 77 lbs., oxygen, 33 lbs.—100 lbs.

Within the same period, chemists have discovered that oil of vitriol (sulphuric acid) is composed of the same oxygen gas, and sulphur, or brimstone; and that these two substances always combine and form oil of vitriol, whenever there is present a little heat and very little water or moisture. So that if fire and brimstone had rained down from heaven, as is represented, it is absolutely certain that there would have been *a shower of oil of vitriol*. For the atmosphere is composed in part of oxygen gas: it also contains more or less of moisture; and the fire and brimstone being supplied from above by a miracle, all the circumstances existed which would necessarily lead to the formation of the shower of oil of vitriol in question. I am not now disposed to deny that the Almighty could send down his fire and brimstone from heaven; but I understand that he *did not* do it, inasmuch as not even the writer of the Bible account tells any thing of the formation or presence of the oil vitriol, at the time of the pretended calamity that fell upon Sodom and Gomorrah: nor has any profane writer mentioned such an occurrence. The truth is, no one, at that day, could have expected such an unpleasant shower as the oil of vitriol would have been; for they did not then know how it was constituted. But now, every school of chemical science daily repeats the experiment of making sulphuric acid, from the elements I have mentioned.

On the supposition, however, that fire and brimstone did come from heaven, (and I should suppose it much more likely to have come from another place, more congenial with the being who governs there,) I have amused myself with a little calculation. On a single square mile, or rather pressing on it, by its own gravity, there is above 13,000,000,000 pounds of oxygen gas. Now, in order to make oil of vitriol, every 57 lbs. of oxygen gas requires 44 lbs. of sulphur or brimstone. If, therefore, the Almighty had been pleased to furnish the requisite quantity of brimstone, (and no doubt by all accounts he has a plentiful store of it,) the quantity of oil of vitriol that would have fallen on the surface of a single square mile, would have exceeded 23 thousand million of pounds—more than 11 thousand tons! How would the stockholders of our Chemical Bank laugh to be blessed with such a shower! This, at 6 cents per lb., would amount to 1380 millions of dollars!! Heretofore have nations prayed for rain for their harvests: but what harvest would be equal to this!

T. S.

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THE QUESTIONS OF ZAPATA.

*From the French of Voltaire.*

The licentiate Zapata, appointed professor of theology in the university of Salamanca, presented the following questions to the junto of doctors in 1629. They were suppressed. The Spanish copy of them is to be seen in the library at Brunswick.

*Most Learned Masters,*

1. How must I proceed, in order to prove that the Jews, whom we cause to be burned by hundreds, were during four thousand years the favored people of God?



2. Wherefore should God, whom we cannot without the charge of blasphemy regard as unjust, have abandoned the whole earth for the sake of the little Jewish horde, and afterwards have given up this little horde for another, that was, during two hundred years, still more diminutive and contemptible?

3. For what purpose has he performed a number of incomprehensible miracles, in favor of this pitiful nation, before the period of all *authentic history*? Why has he ceased to perform such prodigies for some centuries past? and why do we, who are undoubtedly God's own people, never behold any of these mighty exhibitions?

4. If God is the God of *Abraham*, wherefore do you consign the children of *Abraham* to the flames? and when you burn them why recite their prayers even while they are consuming? What! do you, who profess to adore the book which contains their law, doom them to destruction for having followed that law?

5. How shall I reconcile the chronology of the Chinese, of the Chaldeans, of the Phœnicians, of the Egyptians, &c. with that of the Jews? and how shall I acquire sufficient ingenuity to make agree forty different ways adopted by the various commentators of computing time? Should I say God dictated the Jewish books, the reply would be, that God must certainly, then, be ignorant of chronology.

6. What species of argument must I adopt, to prove that the books of Moses were written by him in the desert? could he say with propriety that he wrote beyond the Jordan when he never passed that river? I am afraid I shall be told that God was also ignorant of geography.

7. The book entitled Joshua, expresses that Joshua caused Deuteronomy to be engraven on some stones that were plastered over with mortar: this passage of Joshua as well as many passages of ancient authors, evidently proves that the oriental people engraved their laws and observations on bricks and stones. The Pentateuch informs us, that when the Jews were in the desert, they wanted even food and clothing; when they had neither tailors nor shoemakers, it was not very likely there were persons among them of sufficient ability to engrave a large volume. But how would so large a work engraven in mortar be preserved?

8. Which is the best method of refuting the objections of the learned, who find in the Pentateuch the names of towns which had no existence at that time, precepts for kings whom the Jews then held in abhorrence, and who did not reign over them till seven hundred years after the time of Moses; in fine, passages in which the author, who must have been much posterior to Moses, betrays himself in saying, "*The bed of Og which is seen even to this day at Ramatha. The Canaanite was then in the land.*" &c. &c. These Savans, taking their stand as it were upon the difficulties and contradictions which they impute to the Jewish chronicles, may give some little trouble to a licentiate.

9. Is the book of Genesis to be taken in a literal or in an allegorical sense? Did God in reality take out one of Adam's ribs in order to make a woman? why then is it expressly said before that he created man male and female? How could the light be created before the sun? How was the light divided from the darkness, since the latter is nothing but the privation of light? How could there have been day before the sun was

in existence? How could there be a firmament formed in the midst of the waters, when it is apparent there is no firmament at all, and that this false notion of a firmament is only an imagination of the ancient Greeks? There are persons who conjecture that Genesis was not written till after the Jews had obtained some knowledge of the erroneous philosophy of other nations, and I shall be grieved, perhaps, to hear it asserted, that God was as little versed in physics as in chronology and geography.

10. What shall I say of the garden of Eden, from which there went a river that divided itself into four branches, viz.: the Tigris, the Euphrates, the Pison which is thought to be the Phase, the Gihon which flows in Etheopia, and consequently can be no other than the Nile, the source of which is a thousand leagues distant from that of the Euphrates? It will again be observed that God was a very indifferent geographer.

11. I wish, with all my heart, I could have tasted the fruit that grew upon the tree of knowledge: the prohibition, not to eat of it, appears to me very strange; for God having endowed man with reason, should have encouraged him to instruct himself. Did he desire to be worshipped only by a fool? I wish, also, I could have conversed with the serpent, since it possessed so much intelligence; but I should like to know in what language it spoke. That great philosopher, the emperor Julien, put this question to the great St. Cyril, who could not resolve it, but he replied to the emperor, "Tis you who are the serpent." St. Cyril, it would seem, was not very polite; but you will observe, he did not utter this piece of theological impertinence till after Julien's death. It is said in Genesis, that the serpent should eat the dust of the earth, but you know Genesis is incorrect on this point, and that the dust alone cannot nourish any being created. With regard to the Deity, who comes every day at noon to walk in the garden, and who holds a familiar conversation with Adam and Eve, as well as with the serpent, I must say all this would appear very pleasant to a fourth person. As, however, I believe you are better adapted for the company that visited Joseph and Mary in the stable, I shall not propose to you a journey to the garden of Eden, especially as the entrance is guarded by a cherubim armed from top to toe. The rabbins, it is true, acknowledge that cherubim signifies a bullock. A strange sentinel upon my word! Have the goodness to inform me, at least, what a cherubim really is.

12. How am I to explain the history of the angels who became enamored of the daughters of men, and begat giants upon them? Will it not be objected that this trait is taken from the pagan fables? As, however, we know the Jews invented all things in the desert, and that they were a very ingenious people, it is clear that all other nations are indebted to them for their knowledge. Homer, Plato, Virgil, knew nothing but what they learned of the Jews. Does not this fact admit of demonstration?

13. How shall I escape from the deluge, from the cataracts that poured through the windows of heaven that has no windows, from all the animals that arrived from Japan, Africa, America, and Australasia, and that were shut up in a great box with sufficient provision and water to last them a whole twelvemonth; to say nothing respecting that interval of time in which the earth, still too humid by its absorption of the



waters, would be incapable of producing any thing for their subsistence? How could the little family of Noah suffice to serve out daily to all these animals their proper aliment, it being composed of only eight persons?

14. How shall I impart to the history of the tower of Babel the coloring of truth? Of course, this tower must have been higher than the pyramids of Egypt, since God permitted these pyramids to be built. Did it reach to Venus, or only to the Moon?

15. By what art shall I justify the two downright lies uttered by Abraham, the father of the faithful, who, at the age of one hundred and thirty-five years, made the beautiful Sarah to pass for his sister in Egypt and at Kadesh, so that the kings of these same countries became enamored of her and made her many presents? O fye! how base a thing to sell one's wife!

16. Furnish me with some reasons that shall explain why, God having given his commands to Abraham that all his posterity should be circumcised, the people under Moses were not subjected to this operation?

*To be continued.* 197

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## NEW YORK, SATURDAY, OCTOBER 6, 1827.

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LECTURES DELIVERED AT THE FREE PRESS ASSOCIATION.

*On the Inconsistencies, Absurdities, and Contradictions of the Bible.*

*By the Secretary.*

LECTURE SEVENTH.

In a former lecture, I directed your attention to the deplorable condition of the Jews, during the period they are stated, in Bible history, to have been under the government of Moses, of judges, of kings, and of prophets, who alternately ruled them with a rod of iron, and, the more certainly to perpetuate that rule, studiously withheld from them all useful knowledge, and discouraged every thing like intercourse with their learned and intelligent neighbors. These they were taught to regard as barbarians, proscribed by heaven, and utterly destitute of every good quality. This degraded condition, to which the "chosen people of Jehovah" were reduced by the priesthood, is not only apparent from their own sacred books; but the fact is placed beyond all dispute by the admissions of their historian Josephus, who says, that his people were regarded by surrounding nations as the "most trifling of all the barbarians;" a charge which the author of "Jewish Antiquities," so far from attempting to invalidate, unreservedly admits, but endeavors to excuse, on the ground that the Jews confined themselves entirely to agriculture and commerce, and paid no attention to the cultivation of science or of literature. It was in this state of mental depravity, and unsocial feeling towards the enlightened nations who had then established themselves on the earth, that the unprincipled and outrageous proceedings of the Jews roused the indignation of the rulers of these nations, and ultimately led to the long captivity in Babylon. It was here, and while in close intercourse for seventy years with the inhabitants of this extensive country, the habits and opinions of the captives became so entirely changed, that they lost all re-

collection of their own language, and religious observances, and imbibed the mythological dogmas of the Persians, the disciples of Zoroaster, and of the Hindoos who were of the religion of Brahma. It was thus that the first professors of the Christian religion, who were all Jews, acquired a knowledge of the oriental systems of religion, and from these manufactured a new code, which afterwards, through the influence of an emperor, became the established faith, and is at this day professed as the only true religion, by those calling themselves the most civilized and the most intelligent people on the globe.

The fact, which I have more than once alluded to, of the legend of Adam and Eve, contained in the first four chapters of Genesis, having been prefixed to that book after Christianity had been broached, or contemplated, strongly confirms the truth of the statement that the Jews had no idea of the system taught in these four books previous to the long captivity. This fact is farther confirmed when it is considered, that no part of the story is alluded to in any of the after writings attributed to Moses. We do not find, in the subsequent parts of the five books, a single word about the creation of the world, the fall of man, the introduction of original sin, through the superior power or influence of an evil spirit, the existence of a hell and a heaven, nor of a mediator who was to deliver mankind from the consequences of the transgression of the first man. These alleged truths, so important to the happiness of the human race; without which all must be damned, although said to be clearly and distinctly pointed out in Genesis, and although forming the basis of that "only true religion announced by Deity," are not referred to, in the most distant manner, in the multifarious code of laws, commandments, and ordinances, which the Jewish legislator is said to have given to his people. Does not this circumstance demonstrate, that Moses was unacquainted with the doctrines which, Christians tell us, are so plainly inculcated in the beginning of the Pentateuch? And, is it not equally conclusive, that this part of the five books was generally, if not universally, received as true, by several nations. If, then, the Jews, as is evident, knew nothing before their captivity of these doctrines, and only began to notice them in their writings after their restoration, it is obvious, that they must have learnt them from those with whom they lived captives. All doubt as to this will vanish, when we attend to the striking conformity that exists between the Christian religion, and the religion of the Persians and Brahmins.

Pliny and Aristotle concur in placing the existence of Zoroaster, the Persian lawgiver, from 6 to 7000 years before the Christian era. Some have disputed this; but none have pretended to date the time of his appearance later than 5 or 600 years before the birth of Jesus. This, then, is sufficient to show, that the opinions which Zoroaster taught the Persians could not be borrowed from the Christians. Now, in the Persee scripture, called the *Zendavesta*, we have the precise same account of the formation of man that we have in Genesis, even to the names used in that book. The Christians believe in one supreme, eternal, self-existent being, the creator of all things. In the Persian sacred book he is described as "the first, incorruptible, eternal, unbegotten, indivisible being; the charioteer of things good; the wisest of the wise; the father of equi-

ty and justice ; self taught, natural, perfect, and wise ; and the sole inventor of sacred Nature."

Christianity inculcates the belief in a soul, and in a future state of rewards and punishments. Zoroaster taught the same doctrines. He also assigned the same number of periods for the creation of the world that is done in Genesis ; with this difference, that in the latter book, six *days* are mentioned, whereas in the Persian scripture six *gahans* or periods are spoken of—the whole comprehending 365 days. In the first period God formed the heavens ; in the second, the seas and all the water ; in the third, the earth ; on the fourth, trees, shrubs, and vegetables ; on the fifth, beasts, birds, and fishes ; and on the sixth, he created man, his last, fairest, and best work, to whom he gave the name of Adam. The god of darkness called *Ahrimanus*, assuming the form of a serpent, having visited the earth, became envious of the happy condition of man, and tempted him to disobedience, by which the human race became corrupt and ungodly ; to punish which the Good Spirit, called by the Persians, Ormuzd, or the God of Light, destroyed the world by a great flood, but afterwards restored it to its pristine beauty.

Like the Christians, the priests of Zoroaster, who were called magi, inculcated the doctrine, that God the Father perfected all things and delivered them over to the Son, or second mind ; which they named Mithras, *mediator*, the second in power to God. "He is," say they, "Light begotten by the Father." Heaven, they call "the beams of Light, and the immortality of the Father." Of hell, they say, "Stoop not down to the dark world, beneath which constantly lies a faithless depth, or *Hades*, dark all over, precipitous, craggy, and deep."

"One important point in the theology of the Persees was the introduction of an intermediate being as mediator between *Ormuzd*, the God of Light, and *Ahrimanus*, the God of Darkness, by whose intercession the sins of mankind were to be wiped away, and happiness placed in the reach of all who chose to embrace it by subscribing to the doctrines promulgated by the Saviour, whose name, as before mentioned, was Mithras. He was said to have always, from all eternity, existed in heaven ; and when he was sent on earth he was a preacher of truth and excellence, following a life of the most spotless character and integrity, performing innumerable miracles by giving health to sick men and to animals ; thereby clearly proving the divine nature of his mission. The disciples of Mithras were enjoined to be meek, patient of injuries, of a mild and forgiving temper, and to give the greatest testimony of sanctity ; to be void of all earthly passions, and to have their minds fixed on heavenly things alone ; to keep themselves pure and undefiled, and to dedicate their lives to his service. All solemn oaths and assertions were taken in the name of Mithras, and which were deemed impious and dishonorable to depart from. The priests of this religion were empowered to *grant licenses for marriage*, and none other were valid and legal but such as had been solemnized by their means. One of the doctrines of this mode of worship was the *baptism of new born infants*, thereby making them inheritors of heaven, through the mediation of Mithras, whose servants they then became. At the age of seven years, *confirmation* succeeded this rite, when the child promised to be in reality what had been under-



taken for him in his infancy. Extreme unction and auricular confession (as now observed among the catholics) were enjoined and practised by the priesthood. The hierarchy, or sacred government of heaven, was composed of angels of different grades, divided into archangels, cherubim and seraphim; and the duration of the world was estimated to be at an end at the expiration of six thousand years, when the *Lamb*, who sat on the right hand of God, should come in great glory upon earth, and conduct his followers and disciples to the new world of harmony and happiness."

The resemblance which this account of the character, maxims, and conduct of Mithras, the mediator of the Persians, to Jesus of Nazareth, the Saviour, or mediator of the Christians, is so apparent, that no rational man can mistake it, or hesitate a moment in pronouncing the latter to be a counterpart of the former.

The Brahman system of religion has been clearly traced to a period of between 5 and 600 years beyond the commencement of the Christian era. His mythology acknowledged one supreme being, who "formed all things by the word of his mouth." This being is said to have created a female deity, who brought forth three eggs, from which sprung three male deities, Brahma, Vichnou or *Christna*, and Chiven. Brahma created our present world; Chiven, who possessed a wicked and envious disposition, destroyed its harmony and beauty. The power of defeating and expelling evil, and of cherishing and preserving good, was given to *Christna*. This conjunction of deities constituted the Brahmanical trinity.

*To be continued. 1855*

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### MISCELLANEOUS.

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*Massacre of St. Bartholomew.*—During the religious and political contests which took place so frequently in the early part of the sway of the Capetian dynasty, Paris was often the scene of outrage and assassination. It was in Paris that the most wanton and bloody massacre ever perpetrated was committed, the massacre of St. Bartholomew, of which there is a well written and circumstantial account in these volumes. During this dreadful scene the city, says the historian, De Thou, was nothing but a scene of horror and carnage; all the *places* and streets resounded with the shouts of madmen, who had given themselves up to slaughter and pillage; from every quarter the shrieks of the wounded and dying met the ear. Wherever the eye turned, it fixed upon dead bodies thrown out of the windows; the chambers and the courts were filled with the slain, whose corpses were dragged through the kennels. In the streets the tide of blood was so great, that it flowed in torrents: in short, there was an innumerable multitude of persons massacred, men, women, and children. Another cotemporary writer speaks of this day as follows: "Sunday (August 24) was employed in murder, violation, and pillage. The streets were covered with dead bodies, the river was dyed with blood, the gates and entrances of the king's palace were stained with gore. The paper would weep were I to recite the horrible blasphemies uttered by these

monsters, these incarnate devils. The uproar, the continual report of muskets and pistols, the lamentable and terrifying cries of the tormented, the shouts of the murderers, the bodies cast out of the windows, and the sacking of more than six hundred houses, may present to the reader's mind the picture of these excesses, and the diversity of the miseries and crimes. The commissaries, captains, *quarteniers*, and *dixeniers*, of Paris, went, with their subalterns, from house to house, wherever they thought Huguenots might be found; forced the doors, and then cruelly massacred all who fell into their hands, without regard to sex or age, being encouraged in their work by the dukes d'Aumale, de Guise, and de Nevers, who ran about the streets, crying, 'Kill, kill every one! the king commands it!' Waggon loads of the dead bodies of men, women, and children were thrown into the river. The court of the Louvre and different parts of the city streamed with blood."

These were not the acts of insurgents throwing off their allegiance. Oh, no; the murders were committed by the command of the fiend like king Charles IX., at the instigation of his more fiendish mother, Catharine de Medicis, and was to them a feast, which they witnessed with transports of joy. The king even assisted in the massacre.

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*Martyr (a blessed.)*—A perjured prince, who violated his coronation oath; governed without a parliament; imprisoned his subjects for refusing to lend him money; instituted false, malignant, villainous prosecutions against deserving individuals; reduced his people to the necessity of taking up arms in their own defence; and by his scandalous dissimulation, when about to be restored to power, left it utterly impossible to confide in his honor, his humanity, or his oath, but drove the principal men of the adverse party, in their own defence, to sit in trial upon, and put him to death. Truly, a very "*blessed martyr*."

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*Ignorance.*—Here is the true source of every calamity, famine, slavery, and oppression. It is *ignorance* that nerves the arm of the tyrant, sharpens the desolating sword of war, builds the altar of superstition, lights the torch of bigotry, and spreads want and famine through the land. All those evils flow from ignorance; because swinish, sottish ignorance creates or tolerates them.

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*Effects of Devotion.*—The death of Stanislaus, king of Poland, was occasioned in a singular manner. Being much addicted to smoking, he generally every day finished many pipes. In knocking out the ashes he set fire to his dressing gown. As no one was near him, the flames had surrounded him, when the officer on guard, hearing his cries, ran to his assistance, and extinguished the fire. He might have survived, but a singular circumstance accompanied the accident. He had been devout during the last years of his life, and, as a penance for his sins, had worn a girdle with points on the inside; these became heated, and being pressed into his body while the flames were extinguishing, caused a number of wounds, the discharge from which, at his period of life, proved too much for his debilitated constitution.

*The Good Old Times.*—All that is left on record of the feudal days of Italy which preceded her republics, presents the most terrific aspect of a disorganized society. The people were slaves, brutal in intellect and habits; the upper ranks lived in continual warfare with each other; and princes and popes, regulars and seculars, are found stabbing, strangling, blinding, and torturing each other in the short pauses of open warfare. The horrible murders committed in the family of the emperor Maurice, by the emperor Phocas, were alluded to with approbation by Gregory the Seventh, who (say impartial historians) talked of "*i felicissimi tempi del regno di Foca.*" Numbers of the early popes, like the sultans, succeeded by assassinating their predecessors. Benedict the Sixth was strangled by his successor. The assassinations of Benedict the Ninth procured his abdication. The crimes committed in convents are frankly related by the Italian historians of past and present times—the Muratori and the Pignotti. A young abbot having the eyes of four of his monks trodden out for resisting his despotism, is one among a thousand anecdotes of monastic atrocities. Mean time, feudal princes in France and Italy were committing every species of violence: living by pleasures, and reigning by murders, they sold their prisoners of war as slaves. There was no written law; the ordeal, called in Italy *Giudizio di Dio*, was the only test of innocence; and the accused princess, who could not suffer boiling or burning with patience, was declared guilty, and condemned to death. The work of blood went on with such unceasing activity, that, to prevent a total depopulation, the *Tregua di Dio* was instituted, which interdicted all combats from Thursday to Monday. This was the result of that ignorance, still protected by the modern representatives of the feudal princes of those good old times.

*State of Learning.*—A layman who should pretend to read was stigmatized as a pedagogue, and regarded as unworthy even to look upon a sword. Kings made a sign of the cross to treaties drawn up by monks; because they could not write. In the ninth century, the count Palatine, the supreme judge of the empire, could not sign his name; and the orthography of the feudal nobles of France was a subject of public jest down to the time of the gallant Richelieu, whose love letters kept the lawyers in a court of justice "in a roar." Even the inferior clergy were kept in profound ignorance; and Gregory the Second complains by his legates, that such was the ignorance of the Ecumenic Council, that not only letters, but the scriptures, were unknown to its members. The dog Latin of pope Adrian the Second, and his secretary, has been the derision of the learned in all times, (see Mabillon.) So far back as the 6th century, open war was declared against enlightening the minds of the laity; and pope Zachariah, urged by the bishop of Magenza, stripped a friar, of the name of Virgilio, of his gown, for having insisted upon the doctrine of the antipodes, which, though maintained by Cicero and Macrobius, was condemned by St. Augustine as blasphemous and heretical. The people were ordered, on the penalty of incarceration and fines, to disbelieve the doctrine of the antipodes; and they very religiously obeyed. Such are the times whose institutes are to be revered to complete the social order of the present day.



*Popular Religions.*—All usurpers have adopted popular religions, or religions which promised to become so. Constantine made it the lever of his political ambition. Thus did the Clovises, the Pepins, and the Charlemagnes. The penal codes of William and Anne against their catholic subjects, the sudden conversion of Henry the Fourth, and the protection of the church by Bonaparte, had nothing to do with religion; all alike followed in the beaten track of a policy, now worn out; while in fact, each found, like the Argente of Tasso,

His law and his reason in his sword.

The rest was but political conformity to popular opinion.

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*A Bull!*—The church of St. Giovanni Evangelista is one of the finest in Parma. In one of its chapels (the chapel of the Four Virgins) there is a charming picture of St. Lucia, looking at her *own eyes*, which swim like gold fish, in a crystal vase that she holds in her beautiful hands. St. Lucia was, probably, an Irish saint! At all events, her eyes must have been very naughty eyes, to have required their being pulled out for the good of her soul!

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*An Italian Sermon.*—While at Bologna, we were taken to hear the celebrated preacher, the *Canonico*\*\*\*; and his sermon, both for its manner and matter, was extremely curious. Like all Italian preachers, he had a *conventional* style and gesticulation; he commenced each phrase with a sort of whining chant—then suddenly dropping his declamatory tone, he adopted a familiar, gossiping manner, the most humorous and effective that can be imagined, alternately twirling his cap, taking it off, or putting it on, or appealing to the crucifix, which is always affixed to the side of the pulpits in Italy. His subject was “CHARITY.—“Charity (he said) is the love of your neighbor—I say, (he continued, emphasizing the word) in the homely expression and homely sense of the scriptures, meaning literally your *neighbor*, whom you should love through Christ, (the church,) and not in the vague sense of modern philosophy, which talks of humanity and philanthropy, and such jargon; but this sort of charity, my dear Christians, is a mantle, made not only to cover your own sins, but the sins of your neighbor.” Here he paused, and shook a little tin box, on which a friar went about collecting, and the preacher proceeded: “Charity is silent on a neighbor’s frailties. It does not, like philosophy, attach vices to a class, for the charity of modern philosophy is to exclaim against Holy Mother Church. With these philosophers (i monachi sono furfanti, i Preti birbanti) monks are rogues, and priests robbers.” Here he fixed his eyes on some young men, and at his familiar question of “What think ye, my Christians?” there was a general titter. Then putting on his cap, after a long pause, he opened another exordium in the usual nasal whine, which he concluded by saying, “Charity, my Christians, bids you open your mantle wide, so—and close it upon the sinner, so—(here he most gracefully imitated the act with his own robe,) for, the sum of charity is to GIVE and to FORGIVE.” Here he again rattled his box, and his coadjutor once more resumed his office, and collected from the congregation. He preached, as they all do

in Italy, extempore; and after a short pause, resumed his sermon apparently at the entrance of fresh auditors, who seemed to change every twenty minutes, and to come in, and go out, as a thing of course.

*Morality of the Georgians.*—This wild people have a curious reason for indulgence in robbery. They pretend, that, after God had created the world, he published a decree, by which all people were summoned to take possession of their several portions: the whole of mankind had a share, except the inhabitants of Caucasus, who were forgotten. Upon putting in their claim, which the Deity acknowledged to be just, he permitted them to live at the expense of their neighbors; and most assuredly they reap ample profits upon presumption of the license.

The most ridiculous of all animals is a proud priest: he cannot use his own tools without cutting his own fingers. *Lacon.*

We should justly ridicule a general, who, just before an action, should suddenly disarm his men, and, putting into the hands of each of them a Bible, should order them thus equipped to march against the enemy. Here we plainly see the folly of calling in the Bible to support the sword; but is it not as great a folly to call in the sword to support the Bible? Where we combat error with any other weapon than argument, we err more than those whom we attack. *Lacon.*

When men can once be made to believe the necessity of a mediator between God and them, it is not difficult to persuade them of the necessity of other *intermediate* mediators. *Anon.*

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*Removal.*—The office of the *Correspondent* is removed to No. 15 Chamber street, near the Apprentices' Library, where all orders and communications are requested to be forwarded.

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\* \* Orders for books, in every department of literature, punctually attended to.